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Christian Missionaries on the Wrong Track.

THEIR POLICY CONDEMNED.

CASTE DEFINED.

BY A NATIVE OF LANKA.

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ARE MISSIONARIES WISER THAN ST. PAUL ?

1st. Every nation on the face of the earth has its own peculiarities of habits and tastes. Of all the nations, I believe the Hindus are the most obstinate in their prejudices. For instance, in the matter of food, a Hindu will suffer any privations rather than taste a bit of beef. The great mutiny of 1857 and several other riots are more or less to be attributed to the prejudices of the Hindus against beef and the prejudices of the Muhammadans against pork. Even the Indian Christians, as a general rule, still retain their aversion to these articles of food.

How, then, do the Missionaries further their cause by outraging the feelings of the Indian people by feasting on beef and pork, and by prescribing meals and places of boarding to their converts?

"Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend" (1. Cor. 8, 13).

"The kingdom of God is not meat and drink ; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14, 17).

2nd. The system of caste, which must be viewed purely as a social institution, renders important service in the social economy of India. It implies a division of natural family, a trades-union effecting a kind of division of labour, a provident association caring for the poor members, and a social distinction. Hence it involves a deep-lying divine principle.

Of course there are meaningless ceremonies and coarseness in the observance of it. But when the people, who are proverbially full of the milk of human kindness, are truly enlightened, and feel aright the influences of the blessed Gospel of Christ, whilst each caste may stand as a distinctive race, any evils appertaining to the system must inevitably give

way. Modifications in the system as implying the above-mentioned points should, if necessary, be effected, not by sudden convulsions, but by a slow and wise process so as to be accepted by the instincts of the whole Indian nation.

On the other hand, nothing extraordinary has yet happened in the conditions of life and society in India so as to call for the immediate abolition of caste. The Indians are neither an adventurous nor a scientific people, and depend upon manual labour for their subsistence and comforts. It is highly improbable that even at a distant date there will arise any necessity for a material change in the established order of things.

The Apostle to the Gentiles, who was at least as much a lover of freedom as any native of the British Isles, while recognizing the brotherhood of man in Christ, did not consider himself warranted to disturb the social order of his time—even slavery having been let alone by him—as will be seen from a positive injunction of his and from the advice he gave to the slaves (1 Cor. 7, 20-21).

Such devoted servants of God as Ziegenbalg, the first Protestant Missionary to India, his successor Father Schwartz of immortal fame, and the sound thinker and Biblical scholar Bishop Sargent, ever maintained a sympathetic attitude towards caste. Beschi, the great Roman Catholic Missionary, gave a practical support to caste by himself wearing the costume of a Brahmin Sannyasi and receiving the honors of a sage and guru.

How, then, do the majority of the Missionaries further their cause by constantly attacking the system of caste, and by directly or indirectly lending their influence to indiscriminate marriage alliances amongst their converts, whilst they themselves take very good care to preserve their own rank and nationality?

One of the Missionaries was once engaged to a worthy Eurasian member of his denomination; the pressure brought to bear upon him was such that he had to leave India abruptly, deserting the object of his love. It was in a town in Ceylon, that, when a Wesleyan Missionary was married, no

Ceylonese members of the congregation, though several of them were persons of considerable influence and enlightenment, were invited on the occasion, even to so much as witness the ceremonies in the chapel. A Doctor of Divinity was once kept out of a social gathering of Missionaries in Tinnevelly on account of his nationality.

Surely, the ways of the Missionaries, to say the least, are altogether irregular and unbrotherly. They appear as men engaged rather in the social disintegration of India than in its spiritual regeneration. Certain Missionary bodies, notably the Arcot Americans, have brought themselves into utter disrepute by their ugly work of direct social disintegration. The sooner they change their policy the better it will be for the cause they espouse.

It may be news in England that out of the hundreds of Christians of the Protestant denominations in the city of Madras, during my three years' sojourn therein, I have not come across one handicraftsman—one barber, one dhoby, one scavenger, one carpenter, one tailor, one blacksmith, one goldsmith, one shoemaker.

The fact is, by the way in which Missionaries present Christianity in India, they sow the seeds of discontent so that the converts are ashamed of their ancestral trades and occupations. No sooner do they embrace Christianity than they wish to become "gentlemen" all at once, clerks and officials, teachers and professors, "reverends" and evangelists.

"Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called" (1 Cor. 7,20).

3rd. The Hindus are a simple race with but few wants and requirements. Their ideal of a messenger of God is thoroughly ascetic and apostolic—a wanderer of their own race with wooden shoes and an animal skin, with flowing robes and hair, with great self-denial and oneness of purpose with single-hearted devotion to his Maker, ever ready to be the servant of all.

How, then, do the Missionaries further their cause by their dog-carts and broughams, by their lawn-tennis and other games, by their national dress and rich food, by their palatial residences and retinue of servants, by their uncommunicativeness and reservedness, by the pride of their colour and race ?

"I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor. 9,22).

"Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep ; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness" (2 Cor. 11, 24–27).

God Almighty loves India with a special love. In spite of all human drawbacks, may He pour out upon the people of this ancient land a spirit of true religious enquiry !

SAIDAPET, MADRAS,
December 1894.

SAM. MANICKAM,
A Ceylonese.